REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated August 4, 2010. Claims 1 to 66 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 6, 15, 17, 29 to 31, 36, 45, 47 and 59 to 66 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 5, 31 to 35 and 61 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0055888 (Beran) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,758,328 (Giovannoli) and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0026410 (Woloshin). Claim 5 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Beran in view of Giovannoli and Woloshin and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,754,857 (Gadol). Claims 6 to 30, 36 to 60 and 62 to 66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Beran in view of Giovannoli and Woloshin and further in view of eFlow article (March 2000). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 generally concerns an information processing apparatus which communicates with an approval service provider terminal. The information processing apparatus receives an approval service object from the approval service provider terminal. The approval service object includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The information processing apparatus stores the received approval service object, and prepares an approval request based on values entered by a user of the information processing apparatus. According to one aspect, the information processing apparatus makes a decision, in itself, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object

15

without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus. The information processing apparatus then outputs the decision.

Referring specifically to claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus which communicates with an approval service provider terminal. The information processing apparatus includes receiving means for receiving an approval service object from the approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The information processing apparatus further includes storage means for storing the approval service object received by the receiving means, and approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the information processing apparatus. The information processing apparatus also includes decision means for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve the prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision means.

Claims 31 and 61 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose all of the features of Claims 1, 31 and 61, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the feature of deciding, in an information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to

a decision condition included in a stored approval service object without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus.

Beran is merely seen to disclose transmitting a request provided by a requisitioner 300 to a proper approver 304 for approval of the request. (See paragraphs [0047] to [0050] of Beran). Giovannoli is seen to disclose that buyers formulate requests for quotation and transmit them to a computerized network which broadcasts the request for quotation to prospective sellers. The sellers responses are communicated to the prospective buyer either over the communications network or via other acceptable communication means. (See column 2, lines 42 to 50 of Giovannoli). Woloshin is seen to disclose that a merchant, at his/her computer, "clicks" on a link, and is then hyperlinked to a Merchant Service Provider's Online Merchant Application Server's 200 landing page. The merchant then completes application forms, and data entered into the forms is validated and captured in an application database 208 residing on the Merchant Service Provider's Online Merchant Application Server 200. (See paragraph [0019] of Woloshin). The application forms are then imported from the application database to the Merchant Service Provider's system 300, and then go through an auto-approval process 304 performed by the Merchant Service Provider. (See paragraph [0021] of Woloshin).

Thus, in each of Beran, Giovannoli and Woloshin, certain information is sent from one apparatus to another apparatus causing the other apparatus to make a decision on the information. In contrast, in Claims 1, 31 and 61, an information processing apparatus decides, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to a decision

condition included in a stored approval service object without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 1, 31 and 61 recite subject matter that would not have been obvious to those of ordinary skill based on the cited portions of Beran, Giovannoli or Woloshin.

The remaining applied references, namely Gadol and eFlow article, are not seen to remedy the above-described deficiencies of Beran, Giovannoli and Woloshin.

Accordingly, Claims 1, 31 and 61 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 6 is directed to an approval system comprising a service server, an approval service provider terminal and a client terminal, wherein the service server manages plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal. The client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal, and acquisition means for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching the approval request, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, wherein the approval service object includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The client terminal further includes decision performing means for performing a decision, in the client terminal, as to whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the acquired approval service object without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision performing means.

Claims 36 and 62 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 6.

Amended independent Claim 15 is directed to a service server which communicates with an approval service provider terminal and a client terminal. The service server includes approval service storage means for storing plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal, wherein each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The service server further includes search and transmission means for searching for an approval service object which matches an approval request based on a search instruction received from the client terminal and transmitting the approval service object located by the search to the client terminal. The client terminal receives the transmitted approval service object and decides whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the received approval service object without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus, and the approval request is prepared based on values entered by a user.

Claims 45 and 63 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the server of Claim 15.

Amended independent Claim 17 is directed to an approval system comprising an approval service provider terminal, a service server, a client terminal and a request server, wherein the service server manages plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal, and wherein each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The client terminal includes approval request

preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal, and the request server includes approval request storage means for storing the approval request prepared in the client terminal. The request server further includes acquisition means for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching the approval request stored in the approval request storage means, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, decision performing means for performing a decision as to whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the acquired approval service object without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision performing means.

Claims 47 and 64 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 17.

Amended independent Claim 29 is directed to an approval system comprising an approval service provider terminal, a service server and a client terminal, wherein the service server manages plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal, and wherein each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider. The client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal, search means for searching for an approval service object matching the approval request, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, transmission means for transmitting the approval request to the service server, in the case that the approval service object is located by the search means, and reception means for receiving the result of

20

approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the service server. The service

server includes decision performing means for performing the approval decision for the

approval request transmitted from the client terminal by applying the approval request to

the decision condition included in the approval service object matching the approval

request without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus, and

transmission means for transmitting a result of the approval decision to the client terminal.

        Claims 59 and 65 are directed to a method and a computer program,

respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 29.

        Amended independent Claim 30 is directed to an approval system

comprising an approval service provider terminal, a service server, a client terminal and a

the approval service provider terminal, each of the approval service objects includes a

decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider,

and the client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an

approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal. The request

server includes approval request storage means for storing the approval request prepared in

the client terminal, search means for searching for an approval service object matching the

approval request stored in the approval request storage means, among the plural approval

service objects registered in the service server, transmission means for transmitting the

approval service object to the service server, in the case that the approval service object is

located by the search means, and reception means for receiving the result of approval

decision for the approval request from the service server. The service server includes

decision performing means for performing the approval decision for the approval request

transmitted from the request server by applying the approval request to the decision

condition included in the approval service object matching the approval request without transferring the prepared approval request to another apparatus, and transmission means for transmitting a result of the approval decision to the request server.

Claims 60 and 66 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 30.

Claims 6, 15, 17, 29, 30, 36, 45, 47, 59, 60 and 62 to 66 include features similar to the features included in Claims 1, 31 and 61 and therefore, are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the reasons discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the claims, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

<u>REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW</u>

Applicants respectfully request that, once the Examiner is ready to take up action on this Amendment, that Applicants' undersigned attorney be contacted to schedule an interview to discuss the foregoing amendments and remarks in more detail.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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